

# The GLOCEPS

## Webinar Series | Week 5 Report

### Theme: Institutionalizing the Raila Odinga Legacy: Constitutionalism, Democratic Reform, and the Realization of African Union Agenda 2063

#### Overview and Analytical Framing

The Global Centre for Policy and Strategy (GLOCEPS) convened the fifth session of its ten-week webinar series on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2026. The session examined electoral integrity and elite political settlements as key pathways to democratic consolidation in Africa.

The discussion was anchored on two interrelated themes. First, a comparative analysis of electoral integrity across Kenya, Tanzania, and Senegal. Second, an assessment of elite political agreements, particularly Kenya's 2018 Handshake, as mechanisms for conflict resolution in fragile democracies.

#### The session was guided by three core questions.

- i. How can electoral contestation be managed to strengthen institutional legitimacy in Africa?
- ii. What lessons do elite political agreements offer for sustainable conflict resolution beyond personal deals?
- iii. How do constitutionalism, electoral systems, and political culture interact in shaping democratic outcomes

A central conclusion was that democratic consolidation requires a shift from personality-driven politics toward institutionally anchored governance systems aligned with the African Union Agenda 2063.

#### Strategic Context and Opening Reflections

The session was opened by Dr. Kenedy Asembo, the Executive Director of GLOCEPS, who situated the webinar within the Governance and Ethics Pillar. He emphasized a transition from biographical reflection to rigorous institutional analysis, noting that outputs will feed into the GLOCEPS Eastern Africa Journal of Policy and Strategy.

Prof Noah O Midamba, PhD, GLOCEPS Senior Associate, opened the session. He framed the discussion within the AU Agenda 2063, arguing that Raila Odinga's legacy should be understood as a source of institutional lessons on constitutional reform and conflict management across Africa.

The session was moderated by Mr Stephen Kiema, who ensured structured engagement across two paper presentations, discussant inputs, and plenary reflections.



## Summary of Key Papers

### Paper I:

#### Mirror for African Democracy Comparative Reflection from Kenya, Tanzania, and Senegal

#### Author Elizabeth Adundo Yogo

The paper provides a comparative analysis of electoral integrity using Kenya's 2007 to 2022 electoral cycles and election observation experiences in Tanzania, 2025, and Senegal, 2024.

### Key Insights

#### Evolution of Raila Odinga's Political Role

The paper traces Odinga's trajectory from resistance politics in the 1980s to 1990s to electoral contestation from 2007 to 2017, elite political settlement in 2018 Handshake, and democratic acceptance in 2022. This reflects broader African democratic transitions from conflict to institutional engagement.

#### The Odinga Paradox

The paper argues that political leaders who consistently lose elections can still strengthen democracy through legal contestation and peaceful acceptance of results. Odinga's 2022 concession is presented as a reinforcement of electoral norms.

#### Comparative Electoral Integrity

The paper argues that the Senegal 2024 elections demonstrated strong institutional resilience, including judicial independence, peaceful transition, and incumbent concession. It also highlights that the Tanzania 2025 elections demonstrated a democratic decline marked by opposition suppression, weakened institutions, and limited accountability. The paper further underscores that the Kenya 2022 elections demonstrated mixed

outcomes, including peaceful transition, judicial arbitration, but weakened public trust and institutional tensions.

#### Institutional Determinants of Democracy

Independent electoral bodies, judicial autonomy, and elite acceptance of outcomes emerge as decisive factors in electoral credibility.

### Paper II: National Unity and Political Agreements: The Handshake as a Model for Conflict Resolution

#### Authors Barrack Ogada and Dr Elizabeth Obura, PhD

This paper analyses Kenya's 2018 Handshake using elite bargaining theory.

### Key Insights

#### Crisis De-escalation Function

The Handshake rapidly reduced political tensions, halted protests, and prevented escalation into violence similar to 2007 and 2008.

#### Elite Realignment and Political Fragmentation

While stabilizing relations between Uhuru Kenyatta and Raila Odinga, the agreement deepened divisions within the ruling coalition, reshaping Kenya's 2022 political landscape.

#### Building Bridges Initiative BBI

BBI attempted to institutionalize the Handshake through constitutional reform but was invalidated by the Supreme Court due to procedural and constitutional defects.





## Structural Weakness of Informal Agreements

The Handshake lacked institutional safeguards, relying on elite trust rather than enforceable structures, making it vulnerable to political shifts.

### Conclusion

Elite agreements can manage crises, but are insufficient substitutes for institutionalized governance frameworks.

## Discussants' Reflections

### Paper I Discussants

#### Dr. Saul Marigat, PhD.

- Strong empirical grounding, but weak structure and presentation
- Inconsistent formatting and overuse of bullet points
- Weak comparability between longitudinal Kenya and single-election cases, Tanzania, and Senegal
- Over-reliance on personal observation data
- Recommendation to adopt structured comparative indicators and improve methodological clarity

#### Dr. Michael Sitawa, PhD.

- Analytical depth is limited, and findings are largely descriptive rather than interpretive.
- The Odinga Paradox is not fully interrogated, especially regarding youth leadership and legitimacy questions
- No clear methodological framework for data selection or analysis
- Gender, youth, and inclusion dimensions are underdeveloped

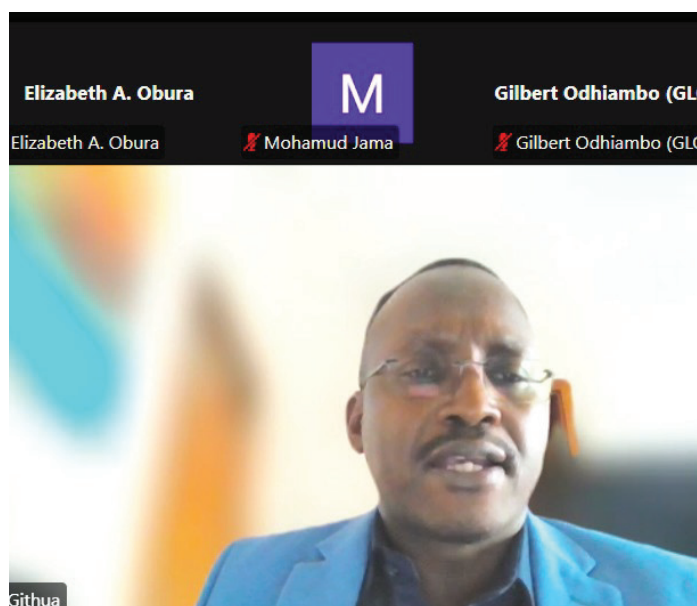
### Paper II Discussants

#### Dr. Edgar Githua, PhD.

- Strong theoretical alignment with elite bargaining theory
- Weak engagement with civil society and grassroots actors
- Methodological limitations due to reliance on secondary data sources
- Insufficient analysis of institutional drivers behind BBI failure

#### Dr. Constance Gikonyo, PhD.

- Handshake reconfigured elite conflict but displaced tensions elsewhere
- Limited analysis of external actors, such as donors and the diplomatic community
- Weak explanation of public ambivalence toward the agreement
- Need to integrate spoiler theory to better explain opposition dynamics





## Plenary Reflections

Key cross-cutting issues included the need to define institutionalizing legacy through measurable indicators beyond narrative analysis. Participants noted that elite bargains are effective for crisis management but weak for long-term stability.

Senegal was highlighted as a case of institutional resilience, while Tanzania represented democratic decline and Kenya a fragile hybrid system. The Odinga Paradox remains underdeveloped, particularly regarding generational renewal and legitimacy questions.

Gender and inclusion gaps persist despite the relevance of the African Union Agenda 2063. Methodological weaknesses were also identified, including limited triangulation and a lack of comparative symmetry.

## Key Areas of Improvement

### Paper One Improvement Areas

Strengthen structure through a clear academic format, including introduction, background, methodology, findings, discussion, and conclusion.

- Develop a consistent comparative framework using standardized indicators across countries.
- Improve methodological transparency, including data sources selection criteria and triangulation beyond personal observation.
- Strengthen theoretical grounding using established democratic consolidation and electoral integrity frameworks.
- Address the Odinga Paradox directly with evidence-based analysis on leadership succession and legitimacy.

- Integrate gender, youth, and inclusion analysis aligned to the African Union Agenda 2063 Aspiration6.
- Move from descriptive comparison to deeper interpretive and explanatory analysis.

### Paper Two Improvement Areas

- Strengthen the theoretical framework by integrating elite bargaining theory with spoiler theory and institutional resilience approaches.
- Clarify methodological approach, including data selection logic and analytical procedures.
- Expand analysis of civil society and grassroots actors beyond elite-centered perspectives.
- Deepen the explanation of the Building Bridges Initiative failure beyond legal ruling to include political economy factors.
- Incorporate analysis of external actors, including the diplomatic community, regional bodies, and development partners.
- Improve narrative flow and coherence by reducing repetition and strengthening argument progression.





## Cross-Cutting Analytical Insights

- Institutional strength is the primary determinant of democratic resilience
- Informal political systems undermine constitutional frameworks
- Comparative analysis requires standardized indicators
- African Union Agenda 2063 remains underutilized as an analytical framework
- Losing leaders can strengthen democracy through acceptance of electoral outcomes
- Elite agreements are temporary stabilizers, not structural solutions

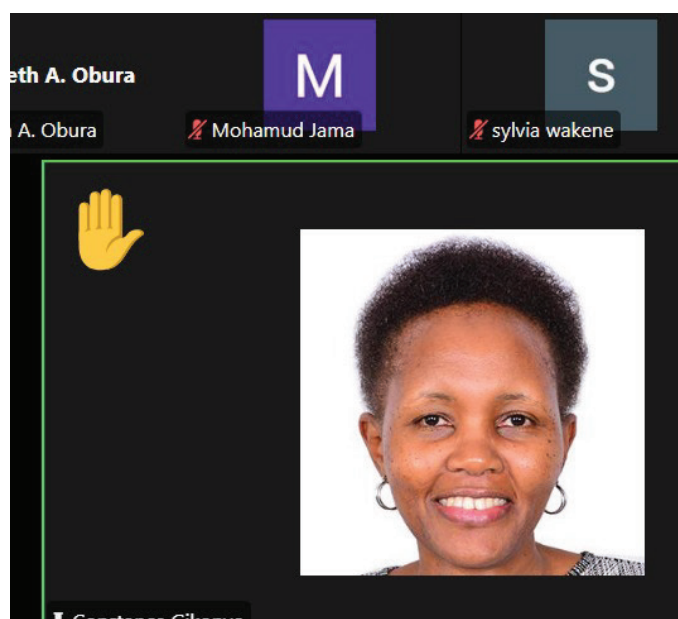
### Conclusion

In the vote of thanks, Prof Mohamud Jama PhD, noted that the session advanced the series from commemoration to institutional and comparative political analysis.

He emphasized three central conclusions. First, electoral integrity depends on both institutions and political culture. Second, elite agreements are

effective for crisis management but weak for structural reform. Third, methodological rigor and comparative symmetry are essential for credible political analysis.

The session reinforced the need for stronger institutional frameworks, improved methodological consistency, and deeper engagement with comparative African democratic experiences under the broader vision of the African Union Agenda 2063.



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